

Message Text

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-----009362 180026Z /62
O 172346Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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STADIS////////////////////////////////////
FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM DEPUTY UNDER SEC FOR MGT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AODE, USTS, UK

SUBJECT: MODE - PROPOSAL TO CLOSE USTS OFFICE LONDON:
CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST

REF: TELECON WITH THE AMBASSADOR AUGUST 17.

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER DATED AUGUST 10, SENT TO
SECRETARY BY SENATOR CANNON, CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION, AND BY SENATOR INOUE, CHAIR-
MAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND TOURISM.

QUOTE. LAST DECEMBER 1, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF INFORMATION
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IT HAD RECEIVED THAT AMBASSADOR BREWSTER HAD RECOMMENDED
CLOSING THE LONDON OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRAVEL
SERVICE, THE COMMITTEE WROTE TO YOU EXPRESSING ITS CON-
CERN.

BECAUSE TRAVEL AND TOURISM MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION
(OVER \$115 BILLION ANNUALLY) TO THE ECONOMY OF THE UNITED

STATES, THE LAW (INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ACT OF 1961) DIRECTS THE UNITED STATES TRAVEL SERVICE TO PROMOTE TOURISM FROM ABROAD. THE COMMITTEE WONDERED THEREFORE WHAT OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS WOULD PROMPT AMBASSADOR BREWSTER TO RECOMMEND CLOSING THE LONDON OFFICE, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE SECOND LARGEST SUPPLIER OF OVERSEAS

VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES.

SPECIFICALLY, THE COMMITTEE WAS INTERESTED IN KNOWING IF THE AMBASSADOR HAD CONSIDERED THE CONTRIBUTION WHICH TRAVELERS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM MAKE TO OUR ECONOMY. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE ALSO ASKED IF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF THE U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN GREAT BRITAIN, AND MANAGERS OF CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAUS IN CITIES THROUGHOUT THE U.S. WERE ASKED BY AMBASSADOR BREWSTER IF, IN THEIR JUDGMENT, USTS/LONDON WAS MAKING A UNIQUE AND VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS PROMOTING THE UNITED STATES AS AN INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DESTINATION.

FROM THE REPLY OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY BENNET (DECEMBER 23, 1977) AND SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE IT APPEARS THAT NEITHER THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN LONDON NOR THE HEADS OF U.S. CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAUS HAD BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE ROLE OF USTS/LONDON.

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THE COMMITTEE UNDERSTANDS THAT BY LETTER DATED JULY 27, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE HAS BEEN INFORMED BY DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MANAGEMENT, BEN H. READ, THAT THE NSC SENIOR MANAGEMENT REVIEW GROUP HAS DECIDED TO UPHOLD THE EARLY FINDING OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, GEORGE VEST, TO ELIMINATE THE USTS/LONDON OFFICE; AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE HAS ONE FINAL RIGHT OF APPEAL TO THE NSC POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE WHICH YOU CHAIR.

WE RESPECTFULLY URGE THE COMMITTEE TO RECONSIDER THE IMMEDIATE DECISION TO CLOSE THE USTS/LONDON OFFICE. IN DOING SO WE BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER WORTHWHILE GOVERNMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES MIGHT BE ACHIEVED BY THE LONDON CLOSING

ARE OUTWEIGHED BY THE CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAKE TO THE ECONOMY OF THE U.S., AND THE UNIQUE AND NECESSARY ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR BY A DISTINCT GOVERNMENT TRAVEL PRESENCE THERE.

IN ADDITION TO RAISING A SERIOUS QUESTION OF WHETHER THE LONDON CLOSING IS CONSISTENT WITH USTS' STATUTORY MANDATE UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ACT OF 1961, WE ALSO BE-

LIEVE SUCH A CLOSING WOULD BE ESPECIALLY UNTIMELY AND PREMATURE ON THE EVE OF A MAJOR CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT TO RATIONALIZE AND HARMONIZE THE FEDERAL EFFORT IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM SO THAT IT WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

THE COMMITTEE HAS JUST ABOUT COMPLETED ITS NATIONAL TOUR-

ISM POLICY WHICH IT WAS MANDATED TO UNDERTAKE FOUR YEARS AGO BY S.J. RES. 347, A SENATE RESOLUTION CO-SPONSORED BY 71 SENATORS AND UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO BY THE SENATE. PURSUANT TO THAT RESOLUTION THE COMMITTEE EXPECTS TO REPORT LEGISLATION EARLY NEXT YEAR WHICH WILL RATIONALIZE THE VAST FEDERAL POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC INVOLVEMENT IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRAVEL AND TOURISM.

WHILE IT IS PREMATURE TO SPECIFY THE EXACT FORM OF THAT LEGISLATION, IT WILL MOST CERTAINLY INCLUDE A LARGER AND MORE EFFECTIVE COMMITMENT TO A UNITED STATES TRAVEL PRESENCE OVERSEAS.

FOR ALL OF THE FOREGOING REASONS WE AGAIN RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT YOUR COMMITTEE RECONSIDER THE DECISION TO CLOSE THE USTS/LONDON OFFICE. END QUOTE.

2. LETTER CORRECTLY SUMMARIZES STATUS OF MODE CASE IN QUESTION, WHICH, ACCORDING TO A COMMERCE LETTER DATED AUGUST 10, WILL BE APPEALED TO THE NSC POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE, POSSIBLY BY SEPTEMBER FIRST. DEPARTMENT RECORDS SHOW SET OF MATERIALS ON THIS CASE, INCLUDING DETAILED LETTER OF MAY 25 FROM UNDER SECRETARY HARMAN TO BEN READ, WAS FORWARDED TO EMBASSY, UNDER COVER OF JULY 14 LETTER FROM BOB FUNSETH TO AMBASSADOR. I TRUST THESE MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU.

3. OUR PLANNED INTERIM RESPONSE TO THE TWO SENATORS WILL LEAVE OPEN THE SECRETARY'S FINAL JUDGMENT, PENDING RECEIPT OF THE COMMERCE APPEAL. AT SAME TIME, WE NEED TO REPORT CONSULTATION WITH YOU AND YOUR LATEST ON-THE-SPOT ASSESSMENT. WE JUDGE FROM REFERENCE TELECON THAT YOU CONTINUE TO BELIEVE MERITS OF CASE, IN TERMS OF COST.EFFECTIVENESS, SUPPORT CLOSURE OF USTS OFFICE (WHICH IS OUR ASSESSMENT ALSO).

4. PLEASE CONFIRM. VANCE

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